DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 355 560 CS 508 083

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TITLE Socialization by Way of Symbolic Interactionism and Culture Theory: A Communication Perspective.
PUB DATE 1 Nov 92
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (78th, Chicago, IL, October 29-November 1, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication Research; Models; *Organizational Communication; *Socialization
IDENTIFIERS *Culture Theory; Organizational Culture; Research Suggestions; *Symbolic Interactionism

ABSTRACT

While not presuming to present a model of organizational socialization that is complete and totally accurate, this paper examines organizational socialization in a new way through the lenses of symbolic interactionism and culture theory. The first section of the paper describes the basic tenets of symbolic interactionism and how these have been applied to organizational studies. The second section of the paper outlines culture theory and describes how it has been used as a theoretical, but not practical, base for socialization. The third section looks at the variables and outcomes of socialization, and how these can be seen in a new light through symbolic interactionism and culture theory. The final section proposes a model of the interaction between these three theoretical areas, suggests directions for further research, and proposes nine communication research questions which could be investigated. A figure presenting a model of the socialization of managers and three tables listing the components of culture, kinds of socialization, and outcomes of socialization are included. (Contains 99 references.) (RS)

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Socialization by Way of Symbolic Interactionism and Culture Theory: A Communication Perspective

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A paper presented at the Speech Communication Association
November 1, 1992

CS508083

Running head: Socialization

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Abstract

While socialization is an important and interesting area of study for organizational communication, there have been few practical studies done. The theoretical groundwork usually focuses on variables and outcomes instead of process. In this paper, socialization is given an unique communication slant by concentrating on socialization through the groundwork of symbolic interactionism and culture theory. A general process model and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion.

Robert Burns, To a Louse

For every new situation there are rules to be learned, guidelines to follow, and people to please. Entering graduate school, beginning a new job, or joining a health club, are all situations where a newcomer might feel uncertain, excited, or both. Becoming a part of a new situation, switching from outsider to insider, is the process of socialization. During this process of socialization, the newcomer has to modify perceptions so that the newcomer can "see as others see."

Organizational socialization is an especially important and interesting part of socialization in general. For this paper, a broad definition of an organization will be used: "the interlocked actions of a collectivity" (Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, p. 122).

Understanding the process by which newcomers to organizations become insiders is important for several reasons. First of all, it is important for practical reasons of economy. It is costly to train newcomers, and high turnover is expensive for the organization. Second, although there are theories of organizational socialization, most of them have not been tested extensively. The theories that have been tested have been shown to be incomplete. Third, socialization is a complex process involving person perception, communication, interaction, human variables, and organizational variables. Not enough work has yet been done to understand and accurately model this complex process.

This paper does not presume to present a model of organizational socialization that is complete and totally accurate. Instead, this paper will examine organizational socialization through two specific lenses, which will focus the problem of socialization in new ways. The first lens is symbolic interactionism and the second is culture theory. Although symbolic interactionism has served as a philosophical base for many theories, it is seldom used to understand socialization. And while culture theory has generated many interesting articles, most of the work has continued in a theoretical vein with little practical application.

The following four sections of this paper will look at the interaction between all of these ideas. The first section will describe the basic tenets of symbolic interactionism and how these have been applied to organizational studies. The second section will outline culture theory and describe how it has been used as a theoretical, but not practical, base for socialization. The third section will look at the variables and outcomes of socialization, and how these can be seen in a new light through symbolic interactionism and culture theory. The final section will propose a model of the interaction between these three theoretical areas, and suggest directions for further research. This paper is particularly concerned with symbolic interactionism, culture theory, and socialization as they are highlighted through the communication of newcomers with insiders.

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Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism was first developed by George Herbert Mead as a reaction against psychology's "kinds-of-people theories" and sociology's "kinds-of-situations theories" (Larsen & Wright, 1986, p. 4). Mead tried to straddle the middle ground, developing a kind of social psychology, which aimed at treating people as more than a product of their conditions. B. Aubrey Fisher (1978) wrote that symbolic interactionism, which he called the interactional perspective, was the most humanistic of communication perspectives because it "exalts the dignity and worth of the individual above all else" (p. 166).

Mead is seen as the founder of symbolic interactionism because his students, after his death, compiled his writings so that his works were the most comprehensive treatment of the philosophy of symbolic interactionism. The name, symbolic interactionism, came from the writings of Blumer, who also wrote one of the clearest expressions of the philosophy and implications of symbolic interactionism.

Larsen and Wright (1986) laid out five characteristics of symbolic interactionism: a rejection of antecedent traits or conditions, behavior as learned through the social interaction process, behavior is the result of mental concepts, social reaction is a powerful factor in behavior, and study through experiential methods such as longitudinal participant observation. The focus in symbolic interactionism is on the processing of meaning through symbolic construction (O'Keefe, Delia & O'Keefe, 1980; McDermott, 1980; Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Larsen & Wright, 1986; Das, 1988; Inoue, 1980). With this as the basic focus, communication plays an important part in the development of the interaction which creates meaning.

Blumer (1969) laid out the tenets of symbolic interactionism in three basic premises:

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.

2. The meaning of such things arises out of the social interaction that one has with others.

3. These meanings are filtered through an interpretive process to deal with the things that a person encounters.

The rest of this section on symbolic interactionism will describe these tenets in more depth by examining symbols, self, and interaction.

Symbols

According to Blumer (1969) reality is composed of objects, and objects are anything that can be indicated. In general, objects can be divided into three categories: physical, social, and abstract. Every object has a

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meaning, and it is this meaning, particularly as it is communicated in a social context, that is emphasized in symbolic interactionism.

The meaning of objects is communicated through interaction with others. This is social interaction, and it has two levels. The first level is non-symbolic. In this level people respond to the actions of others without interpreting them. An example of this would be flinching when people think they are going to be hit. Non-symbolic interaction is reflex action. The second level of social interaction is symbolic, and at this level a person interprets the actions of others to create meaning.

Symbols are at the heart of symbolic interaction. Symbols make up the way that people interact with one another, and can be an individual word or series of words. Symbols call out responses in the listeners. When a symbol answers a meaning in the experience of one person and tells that meaning to another person, it is called language (Mead, 1934).

A gesture is a combination of symbols that have a certain meaning. Greeting might be a gesture that is responded to with another gesture. According to Blumer (1969) a gesture contains three lines of meaning. The gesture signifies what the person to whom it is directed is to do, it signifies what the person who made the gesture plans to do, and it signifies the joint action that should arise between the two.

A conversation of gestures occurs when one person adjusts to another person who in turn adjusts again. Gestures can have different symbolic meanings according to the group of people that are using them, but a gesture is only significant when it has the same meaning for both the people involved in the interaction (Reichers, 1987). A gesture is effective when it produces a change in the perception of the recipient (Das, 1988).

The importance of gestures and symbols rests not only in their meaning for others, but also for the person who is using them. Using symbols requires that the persons using them interpret the symbols in two ways: as the speaker interprets them, and as the speaker thinks the listener interprets them (Fisher, 1978). Focusing on the interaction emphasizes the act of the individual in a natural social situation and shows that meanings are social products which arise from a process of interpretation.

Symbolic interactionism approaches language "in its larger context of cooperation" (Mead, 1934, p. 6). The individual is seen as an important part of this process, creating thoughtful symbols which are shared with others. In order to better understand how this happens, it is now necessary to move to the view of self offered by symbolic interactionism.

Self

Symbolic interactionism divides the self into two dimensions (Blumer, 1969; Fisher, 1978; Mead, 1934). The first dimension is the "I" which is the active portion of the self, capable of performing actions. The "I" is the way that the person acts in relation to the attitudes of others. The second dimension is the "Me" which embodies the conceptions that the self has of others, and includes social influences. The "Me" is the part of the self that is always taking into consideration the attitudes of others which are

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important in deciding action. The "I" acts, but the "Me" gives the direction for action.

The self engages in self-indication between these two dimensions. Self-indication is reflection or continuous introspection (Fisher, 1978). Through this process of self-indication, the self grows and matures. Because of self-indication, action is constructed instead of being a mere reflex or release. As Blumer (1969) wrote, "self-indication is a moving communicative process in which the individual notes things, assesses them, gives them a meaning, and decides to act on the basis of that meaning" (p. 81).

Indication gives something meaning, because it means that the thing has been noticed. Thus a person guides behavior based on this process of noticing. Behavior is one aspect of this interpretive process. Action is taken based on what a person notices, how the person interprets what has been noticed, and what alternative action the person can imagine. Actions must be observed by taking into account the experiences of the individual and the conditions under which the actions arise.

In symbolic interactionism, action is always a social process (Blumer, 1969). Human society consists of people engaged in meaning construction and action together. The actions of the self must be fitted to the actions of others. Since human behavior is based on this contact with others, the last area of symbolic interactionism that is important to understand is interaction.

Interaction

Symbolic interactionism requires role-taking on the part of the individual. In order to communicate with others, a person must go outside the self to see the self as others would see it. A person can take on the role of a specific other, a specific organized group, or the generalized other. The generalized other is the "typical members of a society or culture with which the individual identifies herself" (Fisher, 1978, p. 171).

The individual is influenced by these others to act in specific ways. The speaker's knowledge of the other constitutes the basis for selecting among alternative messages (O'Keefe & Delia, 1982). The communicator adapts to the other, the self, the object, the situation, and the role. The people in the interaction must take one another's roles.

In symbolic interactionism, communication takes place on many levels, and is the dialogic interaction between the individual and the other on each of those levels. This interaction is the basis for any social relationship of shared meanings. According to Applegate (1980), this interaction necessitates negotiation. People who communicate are negotiating the purpose of the interaction, the nature of the setting, the identities of those in the interaction, the types of relationships which may be formed, and the norms and values of the relevant social or cultural context.

Groups, then, are the interaction between the separate acts of all the participants (Blumer, 1969). The participants in a group guide their actions through forming and using meanings. The meanings of the group are always within the individuals in the group, instead of being separate from the group.

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Association with others is determined by how well a person is able to take others into account. Taking another person into account means "being aware of him, identifying him in some way, making some judgement or appraisal of him, identifying the meaning of his action, trying to find out what he has on his mind" (Blumer, 1969, p. 109).

Meaning is always built in interaction, and the meaning in an organization is a function of how people act and what they do as a result of their definition of the situation. An organization is "nothing but an organization of attitudes which we all carry in us . . . that control and determine conduct" (Mead, 1934, p. 211).

To study a group, the researcher has to experience meanings as the persons in a group experience them. To understand behavior, the researcher has to know the cultural standards of the context, the individual goals within the context, and the individual perceptions of the consequences of the behavior (Jacob, 1987).

Reactions to Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism has served as the theoretical base for many studies in very diverse areas of the social sciences. The studies of concern for this paper are ones that have dealt with organizations, socialization, and communication.

While Mead and Blumer did not conduct actual studies, their writings suggest that organizations are more than the sum of their separate parts. Organizations must be looked at as meaning creating systems based on the interactions of individuals. Socialization takes place by learning the meaning that others have for the symbols of the group. Through the internalization of definitions, behavior, and conduct, an individual is socialized (McDermott, 1980). Communication can be broadly defined as interaction, whether it occurs between the "I" and the "Me" or between an individual and some manifestation of the other.

O'Keefe, Delia, and O'Keefe (1980), Das (1988), and Trevino, Lengel, and Daft (1987) all studied organizations based on symbolic interactionism. Two other studies that developed important implications for the present purpose were done by McDermott (1980) and Reichers (1987). These studies will be discussed in more depth later.

Culture Theory

Now that symbolic interactionism is understood, the idea of culture can be developed from the symbolic interactionism perspective. Many people have defined culture (Coeling, 1988; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982; Roe, 1987; Sathe, 1983, 1985), but this paper will use the definition developed by Deetz (1982) since it is particularly suited to a symbolic interactionism perspective. Culture is "whatever a member must know or believe in order to operate in a manner understandable and acceptable to other members and the

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means by which this knowledge is produced and transmitted" (p. 133). This definition is most useful because it places culture within individuals and their interactions. This section will examine research in culture theory, proposed components of culture, and implications of symbolic interactionism for culture.

Culture in General

The idea of organizations as cultures was developed most usefully by Geertz (1973). According to Geertz, the study of culture is interpretive, a process of searching for meaning. A culture and its meaning are public and available for study. People need cultures to complete themselves, to develop a mature self. Cultural analysis is "guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses" (Geertz, 1973, p. 20).

During the last decade there has been an increase in research on cultures (Hebden, 1986; Martin, Feldman, Hatch, & Sitkin, 1983; Martin & Meyerson, 1988; Poupart & Hobbs, 1989; Sathe, 1985; Wilkins, 1983). Louis (1985) and Frank and Brownell (1989) noted that there are dichotomous ways of looking at cultures. A researcher can study culture as a critical variable - something an organization has, or as a root metaphor - something an organization is. Smircich (1985) noted this distinction, and encouraged a focus on the symbols of a culture, instead of the culture itself. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) looked at cultures as a sense-making process in a given environment. Hopewell (1987) felt that a culture reflected the complex process of human imagination.

In studying cultures as the creations of meaning of people in organizations, it is important to realize that people try to present a self-serving view of culture. Wilkins (1983) warned that it was difficult to uncover the meanings in culture because people do not speak about assumptions directly, and some assumptions contradict overtly stated norms. Wilkins proposed three periods when organizational culture was easiest to discover: when employees change roles, when subcultures conflict, and when top management makes and implements critical decisions about company direction and style.

Despite complex models of culture (Saffold, 1988; Sathe, 1983), Geertz's statement about cultural analysis is still true today, "Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is" (1973, p. 29).

Cultural Components

Most studies on culture in organizations have focused on discovered components of the culture. Table 1 contains a list of these studies and their components of culture. Because many researchers have theorized or discovered many of the same components, five general components will be discussed in greater detail: values, stories, rites, roles, and language.

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Table 1 about here

Values

Sathe (1985) defines values as "basic assumptions about what ideals are desirable or worth striving for" (p. 11). Values are derived from personal experience and from identification with significant others. Values can be seen in an organization by the way that the organization prioritizes resources in a time of stress. Leaders and traditions are the source of values in an organization (Reimann & Wiener, 1988; Wiener, 1988).

Values are internalized as personal, intrinsically rewarding, and shared assumptions. People do not give up values or beliefs easily, and it takes a long time for individualized values and beliefs to be changed to suit the presumptions of the organization. Siehl, Ledford, Silverman, and Fay (1988) predicted that organizations that lacked clearly articulated value systems would suffer more trouble than those that had clear value systems.

Reimann and Wiener (1988), Hopewell (1988), and Kanter (1972) have all done work which identified the values which existed in different organizations. Within an organization, the values that the management says are upheld may not really be the values that are rewarded, creating a perception among the lower level workers that management is inconsistent. The beliefs and values studied should be the ones that people in the organization actually hold, not the ones that people say are held (Sathe, 1985). Values can be said to be shared to the extent that they are held across units and levels by members of the organization (Wiener, 1988).

Stories

Stories and myths are another component of culture that have been studied frequently (Boje, 1991; Brown, 1985; Feldman, 1990; Hopewell, 1987; Martin et al., 1983; Myrsiades, 1987; Polley, 1989). Stories try to capture what is unique in an organization, and thus can be an important source of information about the company culture. They are the symbolic vehicles through which organizational creativity is carried out. Feldman (1990) offered this definition of a story: "socially constructed accounts of past sequences of events that are of importance to organizational members" (p. 812).

The culture of an organization sets the context for stories and myths. Stories "serve as storehouse of organization information, supply reasons for organizational events, and promote or suppress motivation" (Brown, 1985, p. 28). Through stories managers learn how employees perceive the company and management, and stories provide a way for management to pass on strategies and give scripts of acceptable behavior (Wilkins, 1984).

Two particularly interesting studies of stories in an organization's culture are Brown (1985) and Hopewell (1987). Brown found that members of organizations use stories differently depending on their level of socialization. As workers are more socialized, the stories they tell reflect more of the organization's values and culture. Hopewell found that in

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voluntary organizations, the self-perceptions of the people in the organization were primarily narrative. Hopewell also found that most communication among members was by story, and that the organizations participated in the narrative structures of the world.

Rites

Many researchers have noted that rites are another component of organizational culture (Barley, Meyer, & Gash, 1988; Martin & Meyerson, 1988; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983; Siehl et al., 1988). The most detailed research has been done by Trice and Beyer (1984, 1987). They defined a rite as "a relatively elaborate, dramatic, planned set of activities that combines various forms of cultural expressions and that often has both practical and expressive consequences" (1987, p. 6).

Rites can be something as simple as a company picnic to something as elaborate as a Presidential inauguration. The rites allow for social interaction on many different levels, and have multiple social consequences. Beyer and Trice (1987) identified six different kinds of rites, including rites of integration that are very inclusive and public, and rites of conflict reduction. Rites can serve as an entry point for newcomers and as a place to manage and change culture. Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1983) noticed that rites oriented members and introduced a sense of regularity into the culture. They described four kinds of rites: personal, task, social, and organizational.

Roles

Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1983) defined a role as an organizational performance that is interactional, contextual, episodic, and improvisational. A person comes into an organization prepared to perform a certain role, and the organization socializes that person to its particular culture by reshaping that role. Socialization entails knowing the appropriate courtesies, pleasantries, sociabilities, and privacies that must be done (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983). A person also has to learn the political interactions that are appropriate to the person's role.

Sathe (1985) proposed a model of the individual's fit in culture that emphasized the individual's role. Individuals look at the organizational reality, their status in the organization, and the organization's agenda, then they try to fit their behavior into the expectations of the organization. Kanter (1972) described this as a process of negotiation: "What the person is willing to give to the group, behaviorally and emotionally, and what it in turn expects of him, must be coordinated and mutually reinforcing" (p. 65).

Frank and Brownell (1989) focused on the roles of organizational leaders. They found that effective corporate leaders created and modified their organization's culture through their daily behavior. Parts of this leadership role included establishing and articulating the plan, using symbols effectively, providing a deliberate role model, focusing on the process, and creating open boundaries.

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Language

The final component of culture is a broad category, but an important one given the focus on symbolic interactionism. According to Frank and Brownell (1989), "organizational members build an ever-larger overlap of common ground from which they construct increasingly similar meanings" (p. 203). This common ground is constituted by the symbols, language, and meaning of an organization.

The language and symbols that an organization uses are determined by its culture. Culture reduces misunderstanding (Sathe, 1983), and serving as the context through which symbols are intelligibly described (Geertz, 1973). Beyer and Trice (1987) defined symbols as "any object, act, event, quality, or relation that serves as a vehicle for conveying meaning" (p. 6). Language was defined by Beyer and Trice (1987) as "a particular manner in which members of a group use vocal sounds and written signs to convey meanings to each other" (p. 6). Many researchers have studied the distinctive use of language in different organizations (Applegate, 1980; Barley et al., 1988; Binkley, 1962; Conrad, 1985; Dandridge, 1985; Deszca, 1988; Philipsen, 1976). These studies all look at the way that language signifies subtle differences between groups and reveals a common perspective.

Through the use of language, communication "creates and constitutes the taken-for-granted reality of the world" (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982). Informal personal networks are an important way that the subtleties of the organization's language are conveyed. The use of language and symbols in organizations is primarily important because of the meaning that they convey to the organizational member. Deetz (1982) suggested that individual meanings rise from the deep meaning structures in an organization. Knowledge is not simply transmitted and shared through communication, it is produced in communication.

Culture from a Symbolic Interactionism Perspective

Now that the components of culture in organizations are understood, it is possible to look at what this research means from a symbolic interactionism perspective. Symbolic interactionism places the importance of culture study in the meanings that are created by and for individuals. By focusing on the interactions, the transmission of culture is studied in a way that shows culture to be a construction of the group members, not as a separate entity in and of itself.

Culture may be no more than the "taken-for-granted and shared meanings that people assign to their social surroundings" (Wilkins, 1983, p. 25). Culture is not done to individuals, but is a sense-making action, a way of creating meaning in a group. There are cultural standards, but they are interpreted by individuals on the basis of their goals and perceptions of consequences (Jacob, 1987).

Organizational culture should be studied by focusing on symbols, and using a dialectical analysis (Smircich, 1985). By studying culture through a symbolic interactionism perspective, a researcher can focus on the processes

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by which an organization is created, maintained, and transformed. Culture becomes a way that individuals use to construct and share meanings. With this focus on meaning for the individual and the construction of meaning through interaction for an organization, it is time to move to the last area of study, socialization.

Socialization

Socialization is one part of a two pronged process of enculturation or assimilation. Enculturation is "the process by which organizational members acquire the social knowledge and skills necessary to behave as competent members" (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983, p. 143). Socialization is one part of enculturation and individualization is the other part (Jablin, 1984). Individualization is the new employee's attempt to individualize his or her role in the organization. Although individualization is a much less studied area than socialization, this paper's focus is socialization. The writings on socialization will be discussed in five general areas: definitions and general information about socialization, the organization's strategies, the individual's tactics, and socialization through the symbolic interactionism perspective.

Definitions and General Information

Socialization has been studied in the last decade primarily as something that is done to a new employee (Falcione & Wilson, 1985 are one example). Schein (1988) typified this approach when he wrote that socialization is the "process of being indoctrinated and trained" (p. 54). While this can be a useful approach, it overemphasizes the organization and underemphasizes the individual.

A different approach, and one more in line with the perspective of this paper, is that socialization is "the process by which an individual learns the values, norms, and required behaviors which permit him to participate as a member of the organization" (Van Maanen, 1976, p. 67; also Bullis & Bach, 1989; Major, McKellin, & Kazlowski, 1988; and Sathe, 1985). While a great deal of work has been done in socialization, there are two theoretical proposals for every actual study of socialization.

Most of the theoretical work has been done by Van Maanen (1976, 1978, 1985; with Barley, 1985; with Schein, 1979). Van Maanen and Schein proposed that a theory of socialization should tell where to look to observe socialization, describe the various cultural forms that socialization can take, and offer an explanation why particular kinds of socialization work in some situations and not in others. They placed socialization firmly within a cultural context, since socialization involved the transmission of information and values.

Theorists who view socialization as a process see it as an ongoing experience that can take years (Blase, 1986; Van Maanen, 1976, 1978, 1985).

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Katz (1985) felt that individuals were socialized throughout their lives, not just in the first six months in an organization. Louis (1980) agreed, and felt that the study of socialization should include leave-taking as well as entry.

Stages

The most common way to talk about socialization is to divide it into stages. While many researchers have hypothesized about stages (Brown, 1985; Van Maanen, 1973; Wanguri, 1990; Wanous, 1980), most have agreed that there are three stages in socialization: preentry, entry, and settling in (Feldman, 1976, 1981; Jablin, 1984; Jablin & Krone, 1987; Louis, 1980; Sathe, 1985; Van Maanen, 1976).

The first stage looks at how prepared a person is to occupy a position in the organization prior to entry. During this stage the individual acquires some knowledge of the organization and has some preconceptions about what his/her role will be in the organization. The individual may have acquired this information through a job interview, reading about the organization, or talking to other people who work there. This stage might set the pattern for the next stage by the degree to which the individual's expectations are realistic.

The second stage of socialization is the area that is most often studied in socialization. The entry phase begins when the person starts working in an organization. In this stage the individual learns the ropes and roles associated with the new job. Roles can be learned through formal or informal channels, such as supervisors or coworkers. Information seeking and relationship building characterize the encounter stage. Most researchers consider this phase to last for the first six to ten months of the new job, although a recent study by Major et al. (1988) suggested that this stage is already over by the tenth week of employment.

The third stage of socialization is marked by individuals deciding how far they will allow themselves to be changed by socialization. This stage is directly affected by what has occurred in the two earlier stages. This stage has not been studied very often, probably because it is an on-going process with no clear end.

While stages of socialization have frequently been discussed in the past, in the last three years critics of this theory have arisen. Major et al. (1988) found stage theory to be conceptually appealing, but noted that it failed to explain what newcomers learned and the dynamics in how they learned it. Bullis and Bach (1989) proposed an alternative to stage theory in their turning point research. They defined a turning point as any event or occurrence that is associated with a change in the relationship. By using turning points they developed a model that might be more sensitive to variables in socialization than the stage model. One final criticism of stage models is that they are proposed as longitudinal models, but then they are studied using static questionnaires or retrospective interviews.

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The Organization's Strategies

The goal of the organization is to orient new individuals so that they will be useful and productive workers. Toward this end, an organization will choose various socialization tactics, use different kinds of socialization, and expect certain socialization outcomes. Each of these strategies for socialization will be examined in turn.

Tactics of Socialization

In 1979 Van Maanen and Schein proposed six organizational socialization strategies: collective/individual, formal/informal, sequential/non-sequential, fixed/variable, serial/disjunctive, and investiture/divestiture. These six strategies represent continua that an organization uses in socialization, and they have been widely used in research (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Jones, 1986; Van Maanen, 1985, 1987). The tactics used are entirely dependent on the organization.

Jones (1983, 1986) developed a questionnaire that measured these strategies, and used it to study differences in socialization tactics which led to differences in role orientation. Allen and Meyer (1990) used the Jones questionnaire to longitudinally examine the relation between the six strategy continuum and the two outcomes of role orientation and organizational commitment.

Kinds of Socialization

Another tactic that organizations use to socialize newcomers is to vary the kind of socialization. Table 2 contains a summary of the kinds of socialization found in various studies.

Table 2 about here

Outcomes of Socialization

The final way that organizations try to influence the socialization of newcomers is through outcomes. The organization wants the newcomer to be committed, satisfied, motivated, and involved in the organization. Table 3 contains a summary of the findings of many researchers who have studied socialization outcomes.

Table 3 about here

Schein (1978) looked at outcomes in a slightly different way by listing events that symbolized an organization's acceptance. Among the tangibles such as salary increase and promotion, he listed such intangibles as sharing of

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organizational secrets. Now that the ways that organizations try to socialize newcomers has been studied, it is time to turn to the other side of the coin: the way the newcomer responds to socialization efforts.

Individual Tactics in Socialization

Sathe (1985) suggested that when newcomers enter the organization they feel overwhelmed by the unfamiliar, do not know how to negotiate culture and other organizational realities, and feel the need to prove themselves worthy. New situations require individuals to reassess and even alter their goals and style. Newcomers might begin their job as naive, competent, or dominant (Jones, 1983). Three common tactics individuals use in response to socialization are making sense of their environment, establishing roles that they will play, and seeking information from others. Each of these individual strategies will be examined in this section.

Sense-making

In her model of socialization, Louis (1980) suggested that sense-making is the logical response to the inevitable surprises of being a newcomer. The four parts of sense-making are others' interpretations, local interpretation schemes, predispositions and purposes, and past experiences. Sense-making is a cyclical process because just when the individual has one thing sorted out, another surprise arises.

A major cause of surprise is reality shock (Blau, 1988; Katz, 1985) which is what newcomers experience when their reality is different from their expectations. Newcomers who are better prepared for their careers and are more realistic in their expectations experience less surprise in organizations and become functional members more quickly (Majors et al., 1988).

In order to aid in the socialization process, researchers have suggested sense-making activities for the individual. Individuals can learn to communicate accurately their own self-assessment and make accurate diagnoses of potential job situations (Schein, 1978). The newcomer can discover how to deal with peers and authority figures and decipher the appropriate reward systems and situational norms for the work context (Katz, 1985).

Feldman and Brett (1983) looked at strategies used by new hires as opposed to job changers within an organization. They compiled a list of sense-making strategies which included working longer hours, delegating responsibility, seeking out social support, and even turning to drugs or drinking. Sherman, Smith, and Mansfield (1986), Falcione and Wilson (1988), and Posner and Powell (1985) have also generated lists of sense-making strategies based on actual studies.

Roles

Several researchers (Porter et al., 1975; Schein, 1988; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) have found that socialized individuals take on one of three roles in the organization: a custodian who accepts the status quo, a creative

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individualist who accepts pivotal values but rejects others, or a rebel who rejects all values and norms. The organization needs each of these people, but organizations are variably tolerant of each of these roles.

Entry into an organization is a time to learn roles and a time to learn the scripts that go along with the roles (Ashforth & Fried, 1988; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983). These roles tell newcomers what should be done, how it should be done, and why it should be done. Performances by insiders teach the roles to newcomers and also remind the newcomers that they are, in fact, new. Newcomers can learn their roles through orientation, initiation, or apprenticeship (Blau, 1988; Cogswell, 1968).

All roles have content characteristics - what people do, process characteristics - how people do it, and social means and rules - the appropriate mannerisms, attitudes and social rituals to be displayed when doing the role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). What people learn about their roles is often a direct result of how they learn it. If supervisors and co-workers agree on the roles, it is easier for newcomers to learn them (Jablin & Krone, 1987). Feldman (1976) felt roles were so important that he included them as his third stage of socialization.

Information Acquisition

Because a newcomer wants to understand the organization, the newcomer will seek out others and try to get information from them. Information acquisition is thus an important way that individuals attempt to control their socialization (Feldman & Brett, 1983; Fidler & Johnson, 1984; Mignerey, 1991; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983).

Some of the variables that influence how much information is available to a newcomer are the structure of communication networks in the organization, the person's status, who the newcomer is friends with, the newcomer's self-esteem, the past experiences of the newcomer, and whether or not the newcomer has "proven" him/herself (Jones, 1983; McDermott, 1980; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Sherman et al., 1986). Incoming messages might include gossip (Hopewell, 1987), small talk (Beinstein, 1975), official downward, superior-subordinate, or work group messages (Jablin, 1982). These messages contain orientational information for the individual to filter and process.

Some of the studies that have looked at information acquisition have found varying results. Majors et al. (1988) found that males relied primarily on a single information source, while females used a variety of sources. Pfeiffer, Van Rheenen, and Lowry (1990) found that individuals in voluntary organizations expressed less need for information than people in business. Jablin (1984) found that the purpose of information acquisition varied with the level of the insider. Newcomers sought interactions with superiors to receive instructions and interactions with peers to give or receive information. Evan (1963) found that peer interaction during socialization decreased turnover.

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Socialization through a Symbolic Interactionism Perspective

Now that the theoretical and practical work in socialization has been examined, it is important to discuss how symbolic interactionism can influence the study of socialization. Two researchers in particular have looked at socialization from the symbolic interactionism perspective. Reichers (1987) defined symbolic interactionism as "the process through which newcomers establish situational identities and come to understand the meaning of organizational realities in particular" (p. 279). Jones (1983), while claiming to study socialization from a symbolic interactionism perspective, limited interactionism to a mediator variable between newcomer behavior and role outcomes.

According to symbolic interactionism, socialization should take place through the interactions that the newcomer has with insiders. These interactions facilitate role negotiation and the adjustment of the newcomer to a work group. Reichers (1987) called this proaction, "any behavior that involves actively seeking out interaction opportunities" (p. 281).

Reichers (1987) claimed that symbolic interactionism links socialization to its philosophical roots. Van Maanen (1976) wrote, "the major factor at all levels of socialization is 'taking the role of other' and attempting to determine what the other's response will be toward one's own behavior" (p. 70). Identity confirmation and sense-making are the results of interaction with others, and the more a newcomer can interact with insiders, the faster the newcomer will move through the encounter stage of socialization.

During socialization, the newcomer seeks to internalize the context-specific dictionary of meaning of the organization, and the researcher can notice this by looking at the meaning of interactions for newcomers (Louis, 1980). The newcomer learns the meanings and definitions of the dictionary and internalizes them in a "Me-I" interaction that forms a repertoire of rules for action and conduct (McDermott, 1980).

The interaction between the newcomer and the insider, and the "Me-I" interaction of the newcomer results in changed perceptions over time (Blase, 1986). Newcomers may pick up ambient or discretionary cues that change their perspectives (Falcione & Wilson, 1988). Blase (1986) called this humanization: the long-term developments in the newcomer's perspective toward the organization.

Socialization takes place because of the exchange of meaning between insiders and newcomers. This is strongly based in a linguistic model, since meaning is exchanged through words and symbols. How well newcomers understand the words and symbols of the organization demonstrates how well socialized the newcomers are (Hopewell, 1987).

Conclusions

Working through symbolic interactionism, culture theory, and socialization can be a tedious process, but this work represents exciting possibilities for future studies. In the final section of this paper, a model

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of socialization through the lenses of symbolic interactionism and culture theory will be presented, and then directions for future research will be discussed.

A Model

Although there are many models of socialization and culture, very few of them are from the symbolic interactionism perspective. Symbolic interactionism, with its focus on meaning that arises from interaction, is difficult to represent in a two dimensional model. Consequently the model that is presented in Figure 1 is a preliminary model which does not fully take into account the meaning created in the process of socialization. Because this paper seeks to develop theory within a research context, the model is presented in the particular situation of the socialization of new managers to an organization.

The first level of boxes in the model, the new manager and the organization, represent the subjects before they come together. This is the pre-entry stage of socialization. The new manager will have past experiences, certain beliefs, and personality predispositions which will all affect how the manager approaches the organization. Specific variables that might measure these individual variables include world view, history of service, desire to enter into this new situation, and self-perceived communicator competence.

The organization will also have had various past experiences, basic beliefs, and will be predisposed to act in certain ways with a new manager. Even though the organization is made up of many people, it is treated as one body here whose sum is more than its parts. This is the organization's culture. Specific variables that will affect how an organization prepares to meet a new manager might include its world view, how successful the last manager was, the organization's size, situation, and physical plant, and how strongly the organization's members identify with this particular organization.

Socialization is a process where the individual learns, through interaction with others, how to be an insider. The individual brings past experiences, a willingness to learn, and a personality which all influence the socialization process. Through a dialogic process between the "Me-I" of the self and interaction with others, the individual will negotiate a role, make sense of the organization, and gain information from others. In the model this interaction is represented by the second level box, or the interaction. This box represents the entry stage of socialization. The most important variables in this stage will be the interaction variables. Variables that might affect interaction between the minister and the congregation will be whether or not the manager has a secretary, the emerging perception of alikeness/difference between the manager and the people in the organization, the organization-perceived communicator competence of the manager, the amount of time the manager spends in interaction with the people in the organization, and the types of information sought by the manager and offered by the organization.

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The final level of boxes represent the third phase of socialization. This phase is represented by the outcome boxes, although socialization is an ongoing process throughout the tenure of a manager within an organization. Most researchers agree that the entry phase of socialization is over by six months (Bullis & Bach, 1989; Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Jones, 1986), and at that time it should be possible to see whether that phase of socialization has been successful or not. Variables that might measure the success or failure of socialization include job and communication satisfaction, the organization's perception of the manager's effectiveness, the amount of identification that the manager has with the organization, whether the manager intends to stay with the organization, and whether the organization wants the manager to remain.

While the model ends at this point, the manager who has not been socialized will have to begin the process over in another organization. A manager who repeats this cycle every year or two is probably incapable of being socialized, and will be forced to leave management. The manager who has been successfully socialized will continue in effective interaction with the organization.

Further Research

Through this extensive review of the literature, and based on this general model of socialization, several areas where research is incomplete can be noted. First of all, although there is a lot of literature on socialization, very little of it is from a communication standpoint. Most of what has been done is from the standpoint of theory-building. Although the fields of sociology and business are important for understanding socialization, the field of communication should be able to show the interactions between people in new and interesting ways. With this emphasis in mind, all of the research questions in this section will have a communication/interaction emphasis.

Secondly, although all the socialization research describes socialization as a process, very few researchers have taken the time to do longitudinal studies. Most of the researchers take a sampling of employees that covers a wide area of socialization. By doing this, they miss when a person moves from one stage to another, and the stage divisions become arbitrary.

Turning point research may be a more appropriate way to study socialization since it looks more at actual moments of socialization. Primarily, the research in this area needs to be done over a period of time before the stage models can have any validity. Some research questions, based on symbolic interactionism, that have not been asked before would be:

RQ1 When do newcomers feel they have made the transition to insider?

RQ2 What meaning do newcomers create as they interact with others that defines their role in the organization?

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RQ3 In newcomer interactions with insiders, what is the nature of the setting and the identities and relationships of those in the interaction? How do insiders and newcomers communicate with each other on a day to day basis over time?

RQ4 What methods can be used to study socialization besides retrospective interviews and questionnaires?

A second area of research that has not been studied is the differences in socialization between voluntary and for-profit organizations. When someone comes in as a volunteer, as opposed to someone who is hired, socialization strategies may need to be different. The few studies that have looked at voluntary organizations have found some significant differences between voluntary and for-profit organizations. A research question that can be asked here is:

RQ5 Are there differences between the ways that voluntary and for-profit organizations socialize newcomers, i.e. their strategies, effectiveness, and outcomes?

A third area where little research has been done is in the socialization of managers. When socialization has been studied, it is usually with people in their first job. Perhaps socialization is different for a newcomer in a higher level position that has held a similar job previously. Some research questions that are suggested by the lack of information about manager socialization would be:

RQ6 Is the socialization process different for managers than it is for people in their first job?

RQ7 Who communicates the ropes and roles to the boss when the boss is the newcomer and what kinds of interactions characterize the socialization of the new boss? How does the new boss interpret these attempts at socialization?

RQ8 What are the turning points for managers in new situations?

RQ9 What are the unique symbols in this organization, and how does the new boss become aware of them?

Socialization of newcomers, particularly as seen through the lenses of symbolic interactionism and culture theory, is an interesting and important area of study. Although much has been written on the subject in the last ten years, there is still much to do. The field of communication can give new focus to socialization from the perspectives of symbolic interactionism and culture theory.

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Table 1

Components of Culture

Studies	Rite	Ritual	Story	Symbol	Setting	Artifact	Value	Language	Fact	Assumptions	Responsibilities	Goals
Binkley, 1962								✓				
Kanter, 1972							✓					
Geertz, 1973				✓								
Philipsen, 1976								✓				
Applegate, 1980								✓				
Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, 1983	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Martin, Feldman, Hatch, and Sitkin, 1983			✓									
Trice and Beyer, 1984, 1987	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Wilkins, 1984			✓									
Brown, 1985			✓									
Dandridge, 1985				✓								
Louis, 1985								✓				
Sathe, 1985							✓	✓		✓		
Van Maanen and Barley, 1985					✓	✓						
Hopewell, 1987			✓	✓			✓					
Myrsiades, 1987			✓	✓			✓					
Barley, Meyer, and Gash, 1988				✓				✓				
Barnett, 1988			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				
Martin and Meyerson, 1988		✓	✓			✓						
Riemann and Wiener, 1988							✓					
Schein, 1988											✓	✓
Siehl, Ledford, Silverman, and Fay, 1988	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				
Wiener, 1988	✓	✓					✓					
Frank and Brownell, 1989		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Gorman, 1989	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓
Polley, 1989			✓									
Feldman, 1990			✓									

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Table 2

Kinds of Socialization

Studies	Selection	Training	Apprenticeship	Debasement	Trial and Error	Education	Cooptation	Interaction
Porter, Lawler, and Hackman, 1975	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Van Maanen, 1976		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Wanous, 1980		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Louis, Posner, and Powell, 1983	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Sutton and Louis, 1987	✓	✓	✓					✓

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Table 3

Outcomes of Socialization

Studies	Motivation	Commitment	Job Satisfaction	Mutual Influence	Job Involvement	Turnover	Climate	Willingness to Accept Constraints	Identification
Buchanan, 1974	✓								
Feldman, 1976, 1981	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
Schein, 1978		✓	✓			✓		✓	
Applegate, 1980				✓					
Jablin, 1982		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Cheney, 1983									✓
Jones, 1986		✓	✓			✓			
Reichers, 1987		✓	✓						
Falcione and Wilson, 1988		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Bullis and Bach, 1989									✓
Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilley, 1990		✓							

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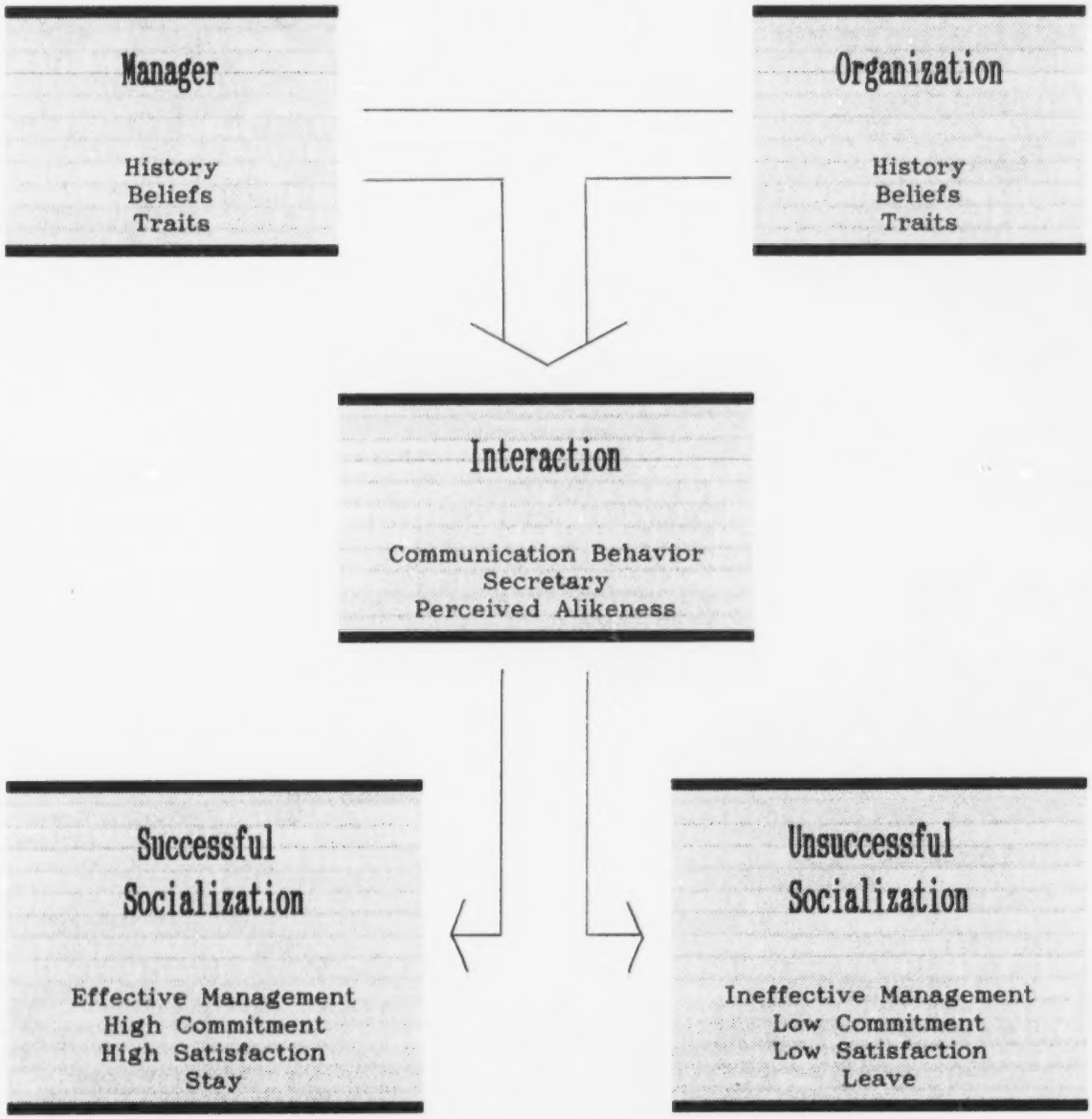
Figure 1

A Model of the Socialization of Managers



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